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Cultural and Educational Practices in the Museum Environment: Transmission of Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

In the age of digitalisation and globalisation, one of the essential tasks addressed at the level of cultural policy, having relevance for all generations, consists in the preservation of cultural heritage. Cultural and educational practices, integrated in the preschool-, school- and higher education environments and aimed at the formation of the worldview and identity of the younger generation, are considered by the authors as effective and relevant mechanisms for transmitting the memory of values, meanings, places, cultural artefacts, etc. Therefore, it seems advisable for the organisers of multi-level projects to address the potential of the museum as a cultural institute. Today, museums are oriented towards a wide variety of visitors, including professionals and creative audiences of all ages, in the presented activities and services. The transmission of cultural memory in the museum environment is implemented not only in traditional ways, but also through contemporary information and media technologies. The introduction of the younger generation to cultural heritage provides them with an opportunity to experience significant values and meanings of the cultural space and time of the city, region, or country at the personal level.

KEYWORDS

cultural policy, cultural and educational practices, museum environment, cultural heritage, transmission of experience, information technologies

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Introduction

In the Russian context, cultural policy is described by Irina Murzina as referring to actions carried out by the state authorities and public institutions of the Russian Federation aimed at supporting, preserving and developing all branches of culture and all types of creative activities of Russian citizens and forming a personality based on the system of values inherent to Russian society (Murzina, 2017). In this connection, one of the main cultural policy directions consists in the protection of cultural and historical heritage. For this purpose, efforts in the field of culture, education and social policy should be unified. This is particularly significant for positioning the region as “culturally significant, possessing development potential in the post-industrial world, authoritative and competitive in the different spheres of economy and social development” (Ibid.). According to Murzina, one of the modalities for the implementation of cultural policy the region comprises the formation of a pool of qualified independent experts capable of objective – rather than strictly departmental – judgments concerning the sociocultural significance of events or projects, as well as media representatives interested in the development of the region (Ibid.). Another condition is the direct involvement of the society in cultural and creative activities and various social groups participating in them. Thus, the creation of a supraregional cultural policy provides the necessary conditions for the production, preservation, functioning, development and transmission of the regional cultural values as the uniting vital origins.

In 2016, the *Strategy of State Cultural Policy for the period up to 2030* was approved (On the Approval of the Strategy of State Cultural Policy, 2016). The strategic document identifies a threat to the unity of cultural space emerging against the background of insufficient use of the culture potential as a factor of social and economic development of the Russian Federation, including its national security and territorial integrity. Culture retains great potential for the formation and strengthening of civil identity, ensuring the unity of the Russian Federation's cultural and linguistic space.

Such a threat to social inequality in terms of the creative development of children and young people, as well as the social rehabilitation of people with various disabilities, has a negative impact on the general social well-being of the population. In this regard, a set of measures is to be implemented aimed at ensuring citizens' constitutional rights to access cultural properties and use cultural institutions to create conditions for improving the population's quality of life.

One of the key problems related to the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage is its actualisation and representation within the region, in the professionally-oriented community, in the service sector and in society as a whole. Today, much attention is paid to the problem of educating the population in the various spheres of modern society: social, economic, political, spiritual, etc. In this regard, the mechanisms for transmitting and popularising knowledge are becoming increasingly relevant. As part of the process of organising multi-level communication in the sphere of culture and art by contextualising knowledge and meanings, interpretation deserves

separate attention on account of its special role in enriching human perceptions of the world. Here, the main difficulty consists in taking into account the diverse reflections of different subjects when encountering artistic works and artefacts. Thus, while the transmission and interpretation of meanings are realised at the social level, the comprehension of events and works of art presented as historically and culturally significant is deeply individual.

The turn of the 21st century was marked by a greatly increased intensity of information density and widespread availability of various technologies and personal gadgets reflecting the high speed of changes taking place in the material and spiritual life of a given society. Such transformations also affect the organisation of daily and weekly routines. Due to a blurring of boundaries between working hours and free time for the 21st-century person, specific challenges arise concerning the organisation of sociocultural activities combining leisure and education. Obtaining new information about something is a process to which modern society is highly attuned. However, the quality of information and criteria for determining its veracity vary widely; moreover, not everyone has the same ability to “sort the wheat from the chaff.” An important objective of cultural policy aimed at the preservation of cultural heritage, to be determined at the level of comprehensive and specialised educational institutions, thus becomes the multidirectional education of the population.

Situating Modern Museum in Cultural and Educational Activities

The normative document *O prosvetitel'skoy deyatel'nosti* (“On Educational Activities”, 2002) outlines the main directions, purpose, objectives and principles of educational activities in the Russian Federation. Here, education is designated as comprising a set of information and measures to promote and purposefully disseminate scientific knowledge and other socially significant information that form the general culture of a person, the basis of personal world view and a set of intellectual abilities for competent action (for practical activities in an informed manner) (see: On Educational Activities, 2002). Thus, this normative statement relies on a contemporary understanding of the concepts of “education”, “continuous education”, “adult education” and “informal education”.

It should be noted that education is defined as the purposeful process of informing the population about available sociocultural experiences, designed for a wide audience that is not necessarily divided into stable groups, which do not involve any formalised procedures for monitoring the successful comprehension of the information provided (Ibid.). Since, it is impossible to check the degree of “knowledge increment” following the attendance of events by an individual person, this is not a task carried out by the organisers cultural and educational activities; here it is tacitly assumed that any subjective value derived from such pastimes are a person's own business.

At present, cultural and educational activities are defined according to a number of key points: firstly, they form a part of an integrative multifunctional sphere

that comprises one of the components of social work; secondly, their main tasks comprise the organisation of people's rational and meaningful leisure, satisfaction and the development of their cultural needs; thirdly, they consist in the creation of conditions for each individual's self-realisation and development of their abilities, self-improvement and amateur creativity carried out in their spare time. Viktor Tuev notes that this process of introducing people to culture, including their subsequent active inclusion in it, is governed by society and social institutions (Tuev, 2003). Here, the main objective is to disseminate various types of information in post-industrial culture. Since cultural and educational activities are involved in almost all spheres of people's lives: politics, the economy, education, medicine, leisure, a career, etc. (Morozova, 2013), approaches and forms of their organisation are aimed at obtaining public support and response.

Defined as comprising a set of organised actions aimed at disseminating and explaining scientific knowledge, as well as other socially significant information, the role of educational events in the popularisation of cultural and leisure activities in an information society becomes obvious. Here, such events correspond to the need to transmit the values of historical and cultural past along with an explanation of their significance and content to the general population. Thus, at the turn of the millennium, the museum becomes a particularly relevant venue in which cultural and educational ideas are to be realised. The various programmes and projects designed on its basis are aimed, first of all, at educating in the spheres of culture and art, at familiarising the general population with their cultural and historical heritage, as well as forming personal moral and even spiritual guidelines.

Information technologies, which have become an integral part of present-day living and educational space, act as means and resources by means of which people are introduced to the values and meanings of culture. The various communicative technologies become means by which processes of communication are accelerated. By allowing their content visualised, allowing the relevant information to be made accessible to many people, dialogue is virtualised to enable it to be conducted independently of time and space in such a way that focuses on the specific needs of its participants.

In the light of these opportunities for the application of information technologies, the mechanisms that ensure dialogic sustainability for all the participants in communicative interactions become increasingly relevant. One of the spheres that ensure the engagement of participants in the cultural space and construction of dialogic relations with modernity is the museum, which offers the visitor various options for understanding the memory of the past and the values of the current reality. According to Tatyana Kuryanova, the museum is thought of as an institution of living memory, covering all significant objects of peoples' memory, as the main information factor contributing to the sustainable and harmonious development of civilisation (Kuryanova, 2012).

The introduction of information technologies has led to some positive results in this sphere. The number of visits to the "*Culture.ru*" portal in 2019 exceeded 31 million, which is 26 times more than in 2014. 20,500 cultural institutions from all over the

country have already registered with the “Culture.ru” PRO platform¹. Last year they used the platform to post more than 174,000 announcements.

In the context of the increased openness and permeability of various spaces, including museums and other leisure and educational facilities, practices that allow the subject of culture to be included and immersed in the action are in increased demand. As Larisa Solonitsyna, Director of the State Central Film Museum in Moscow, notes, in the modern world, museums have gone beyond the usual classical exposure of museum objects. The museum is now quite rarely just a venue for exposition: typically, educational programmes, masterclasses, film shows and lectures also happen there. The modern museum is a multifunctional cultural centre in which essential additional contemporary activities are organised around the collection or around a particular direction in which the museum specialises (Sovremennyi muzey, 2017). In the age of information and digital technologies, museums offer various forms of communication: from conventional (lectures, discussions, exhibitions, etc.) to topical ones, offering the visitors concepts, which they comprehend independently.

The space external to the museum has also changed: cafes, restaurants, souvenir shops and specialised literature shops have appeared. The public and social spheres have become a kind of continuation of the museum space, having taken on the tasks of mass popularisation of the museum as a cultural institute, as well as the implementation of principles of openness and accessibility of the museum to a wide audience. According to Zelfira Tregulova (Director General of the Tretyakov Gallery), museums are transforming into very important places where people get impressions of all kinds, but all of them are connected with art, aesthetic experiences and sensations. Even a souvenir shop in a modern museum should look like it's just impossible to go past, and everything in this shop should attract (Muzei XXI veka, 2016). This space then forms part of the essential aesthetics of the museum's external appearance and attached space, providing part of its overall attractiveness to the consumer.

Russian museums actively employ social networks, especially VK² (short for its original name VKontakte) and Instagram³. Museum institutions have created a single information space, i.e. a repository for digitised documents and photographs. This is a unique opportunity not only for ordinary visitors, but also for professional scientists and experts in local lore engaged in research. In some cases, where museums are ready for such openness, digitised documents are posted on the Internet. This develops inter-museum interaction and attracts a new audience. Many museums today host IT departments, which form electronic catalogues, process virtual data and support the visual reconstruction of artefacts, creating information and multimedia products (Kovalyova, 2015).

The cultural and educational activities of the contemporary museum have become of particular importance, ensuring the involvement of individuals in the general cultural fund of humankind. As Irina Murzina notes, educational programmes developed by museum employees are designed for different social- and age-groups,

¹ A platform for organisers to promote cultural events: <https://pro.culture.ru>

² <https://vk.com>

³ Instagram® is a trademark of Instagram LLC., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

allowing the realisation of the dialogic concept that is fundamental for the modern world (Murzina, 2016). Most museums offer a list of programmes targeted at different categories of visitors, their demands and interests. Programmes are being updated and improved, allowing regular and “occasional” visitors to stay at the level achieved and expand their cultural knowledge.

Undoubtedly, cultural and educational activities today are predominantly realised by cultural institutions, which are oriented to the needs of the population and perform an important educational function in early 21st-century society. Various forms of their implementation not only contribute to the dissemination of information about the world, presented in artistic images, in interpretations and reinterpretations of classical art works, as well as in historical artefacts, but also attract a greater number of visitors, who can profitably spend their spare time in demonstrating their activity, interest and creative abilities in participating in leisure events organised outside educational institutions.

In 2017, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation launched *Artefact*, an augmented-reality smartphone app guide to the museums of Russia. Pointing a mobile device to an art object reveals its name, while the interactive tags provide more details about the exhibit. *Artefact* was adopted by leading Russian museums including the Tretyakov Gallery, the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, the Peterhof State Museum-Reserve. According to museum visitors, it provides a convenient and accessible communication channel between the visitor and the museum. Using technologies familiar to the gaming generation, the app engages and educates by providing quick access to interesting information with visual feedback, as well as allowing users to access resources at any convenient time and regardless of location.

A significant feature of the museum environment is the shared understanding of its universal accessibility through a process of dialogue. This concerns not only social and generational characteristics, but also cultural background factors. The museum has always been and remains the place where a person attributes the “ours” and “theirs”, “similar” and “different”. Thus, the museum environment is involved in the formation of identity. Contemporary projects implemented on the basis of museums are aimed at the active inclusion of the younger generation, ensuring not only cultural and leisure activities, but also cultural and educational outcomes.

Institutional decisions and tasks related to cultural and educational activities at the regional level also lead to relevant practices involving different social groups – children, adolescents, and young people – in order to form their identity and concept of national belonging.

Transmitting Cultural Heritage through Museum Practices

In a multicultural environment, the process of familiarisation with Russian language culture is popularised in pre-school educational institutions. Modern technologies (visualisation and virtualisation) implement principles of visibility and accessibility when immersed in the interactive cultural and historical environment offered by the museum. At a regional level, the familiarisation of children with elements of Ural culture

during excursions offered by Yekaterinburg museums, regardless of their nationality, is another example of this process. Immersion in the museum space allows pre-schoolers to experience a sense of involvement in the history of their native region. This stimulates an emotional response, inspiring their further cognitive activity.

Older pre-school age children of Pre-school Educational Institution No. 254 (Yekaterinburg) (hereinafter – PEI) were impressed by the familiarisation with the creative legacy of Ural writers, which was carried out in various forms. During a visit to famous writer Pavel P. Bazhov's memorial house-museum⁴, the children's attention was focused on the peculiarities of the Ural writer's daily life, the conditions of creation of his works and thus the realities woven into his stories. The children plunged into the environment and settings of the times the writer lived in. Further discussion with the children about what they had seen at the exhibition, what they liked and what they would like to share with their relatives upon their return from the excursion, revealed the children's genuine interest in significant places in the cultural landscape of Yekaterinburg. Within the framework of speech development, the described experience also determined the trajectory of formation of evaluation statements, monologue speech skills, visual thinking, etc. In terms of literary development, the children became motivated to discuss the plot of a literary work and understand details embedded in the text. They learned to build a relationship with the past epoch, the household artefacts they saw and the personality of the writer himself, who thought so brightly and distinctively in terms of the artistic images of the Urals.

As a subsequent stage of the children's acquaintance with the places described by Bazhov in his tales, a visit to the Bazhov Places Nature Park enhanced perceptions of the writer's creativity: for example, the "curved mirror" – a rock with a polished surface situated at the bottom of a mine mentioned in the tale *Tayutkino zerkal'tse* (Tayutka's Mirror) – is situated here. Such a literary outing (with the participation of the children's parents) based on Bazhov's tales was a particularly illustrative result of children's interaction with their cultural heritage. At the event, the children performed the fragments of literary works they like, paying attention to the creation of images, props, and costumes, idea developed by the children themselves in response to their visit to the exhibition. Certainly, role of the teacher-organiser and inspirer is extremely important at all the preparatory stages. Demonstration of Ural minerals (ophite, malachite, jasper, amethyst, etc.), whose names occur in the writer's tales, organically fit into the holiday context. As a continuation, an exhibition of photographs and illustrations was organised, demonstrating the work of Ural craftspeople working with local mineral materials.

In the search for new ways to enhance the PEI's educational and subject-development environment, teachers are increasingly addressing the idea of cultural heritage preservation through the inclusion of the museum space resources in the space of the pre-school educational institution. While earlier it referred to older pre-school age children, already capable of analysing what they see and drawing conclusions based on their experience and knowledge, today the content of museum stands is better adapted for younger pre-school children. For example, within the

⁴ <http://dombazhova.ru/>

implementation of the educational programme of the PEI during familiarisation with various such topics as “Toy” and “Human Being” is now included a visit to the museum exhibition “Made in the USSR” (Yekaterinburg), where modern children come into contact with household objects from the Soviet era and have an opportunity to touch and play with real dolls and toys of those years, i.e., those their parents and grandparents played with. The distinctive features of the dolls, including materials, facial expressions, etc., are discussed with the children. Comparing them to modern dolls, children themselves try to formulate conclusions, e.g., that modern dolls often do not correspond to the real appearance of a person: the material dolls are made of can be blue, bright pink, etc., the hair colour of most dolls also does not reproduce the natural shades of people’s hair; the body proportions are often violated – a huge head and a disproportionately small torso, tiny hands and legs, or incredibly long legs.

Most of the toys of the exposition are Soviet cartoon characters: Cheburashka, Gena the Crocodile, Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet, Karlsson-on-the-Roof and Little Brother, Vasya the Gnome, The Wolf and The Hare from the *Nu, pogodi!* animated series, Leopold the Cat, Buratino, etc. The acquaintance with these toys inspires children’s desire to watch the cartoons or read the stories in which these characters appear.

According to results of the excursion, teachers facilitate various forms of reflection depending on the age-related capabilities of the pre-schoolers: designing a “literary corner”, where children bring books featuring their favourite characters by Eduard Uspensky, Alan A. Milne, Alexey Tolstoy, Astrid Lindgren and others, followed by collective reading and discussion of the plots within various topical units, e.g. organising a drawing or handcraft exhibition or arranging a literary excursion, including organising performances of the plots of the children’s favourite literary works. When working with younger pre-school age children, a visit to the *Family Toy* exposition is organised. In this case, the original idea – an appeal to the “epoch” – is still emphasised, with children being invited to bring a toy with which their parents played in their childhood. The teacher sets specific tasks for the children: to find out the origin of the toys, what materials are used in their construction, what names they were given by their owners and why, and then to share this information in the group. Solving the set task contributes to the children’s speech development: improvement of dialogical and monological skills, grammar structures and enrichment of the children’s vocabulary. Most importantly, such activities promote an intergenerational dialogue between children and their parents.

Inclusion in the museum space through immersion in the Soviet era, which still seems relatively familiar to children’s parents, has rich potential for the organisation of work with pre-schoolers of different ages and for solving various educational tasks of the pre-school educational institution.

The specificity of native language culture can also be revealed through the world of professions relevant in any culture. During the introduction to the topic of Professions, children turn both to modern professions and to those that are losing or have already lost their relevance. One of the disappearing professions, discussed in the process of educational activity, is that of the postman. Through a conversation with a teacher,

children get an idea of the postman's job responsibilities, analyse his or her activities, starting from the origins of this profession. Inclusion of parents in the formation of the perceptions of this profession is aimed at implementing project activities in the pre-school educational institution, in which parents are involved together with their children. In a multicultural environment, this is appropriate and productive: as a holder of national cultural values, everyone can present information on the postman's job in their country, on the peculiarities of correspondence, on the traditions of letter writing, on the history of stamps and creation of envelopes, etc.

The concepts of this profession on the part of children and their parents in the context of 19th-century history is greatly enriched during a visit to the Literary and Memorial House-Museum of the Ural writer Fyodor Reshetnikov⁵, which presents objects associated with the postal service from the second half of the 19th century, e.g., a postal employee's clothes and household utensils, postal carts etc.

The joint activity of the educational relation participants resulted in the creation of a thematic corner exhibition, in which stamps, envelopes, postcards from different countries were presented, which, in turn, expands children's geographical concepts. It is advisable to include the pre-schoolers' stories in the exposition descriptions. This activity requires child-teacher-parent interaction. At the same time, children can trace the evolution of the letter: from pigeon mail and paper envelopes to e-mail, allowing the child to reach conclusions concerning the development of modern technologies.

Extending the concept of the world of professions, teachers organise pre-schoolers' visits to the exposition at Sverdlovsk Railways Museum of History, Science and Machinery (Yekaterinburg)⁶. Thanks to its interactive space, the children become acquainted with the job responsibilities of the railway manager, train driver, passenger car attendant, station master, etc. The sculpture entitled "The Passenger" positioned in the centre of the exposition reminds visitors who is the main person around whom the railway service revolves. Thus, the museum space indirectly teaches skills involving taking cognisance of the details and location of exhibits, relating one's own representations of the surrounding reality to the newly received information. To not only receive publicly-available information about an exhibit within the museum walls, but also to learn to read "between the lines," to form one's own judgments, are necessary skills for the formation of a versatile personality. Older pre-school children were invited to develop their own "railway route". Here, the objective was to develop a railway tour covering cities that the child and his or her family would like to visit. The real opportunities of the railways were taken into account. Materials on the topic "A city begins with its railway station" were presented. Together with his or her parents, a child responds by collecting information on the history and traditions associated with railway stations of different cities or even countries.

Familiarisation with professions through the transmission of the cultural heritage of the Urals reveals its sociocultural potential: historical facts related to the birth and development of the railway, presentation of scientific and technical achievements

⁵ <https://ompural.ru/museum/muzey-fmreshetnikova>

⁶ http://rzd-expo.ru/museums/sverdlovsk_railway_museum/

applied on the railway, as well as the significance of the railway professions, creating the necessary conditions for the formation of a child's cognitive interest.

Visits to a number of museums, whose exhibitions are aimed at familiarising children with the history of a particular profession's development, results in the inclusion of pre-schoolers' families in implementation of project activities: presentation of a pre-schooler's family member's profession during the cultural and educational event "World of Professions" designed to demonstrate all the diversity of human activities, enrich a child's ideas and vocabulary and dispel myths about fashionable and popular professions.

According to our observations, including everyone in an interactive process is an effective means of overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers to communication: at the end of the excursion, parents of children whose mother tongue is not Russian are often seen to engage in communication regardless of their own level of Russian proficiency. Eventually, the parents start a closer interaction with the teacher. Despite the language barrier, they enter into discussion of events taking place in the group attended by their child, take part in parental meetings and intensify conversations carried out through the medium of electronic messaging services.

Traditional forms of familiarisation with cultural heritage, which maintain their importance for older pre-school age children, have a greater value for the younger generation since they facilitate a dialogue with the living reality and stimulate the ability to see historical and cultural objects of the modern urban environment within spatial coordinates, thus becoming a part of their own lived experience. The emotional-sensual experience of events affecting the formation of a worldview always lies at the heart of children's familiarity with the cultural environment of their urban environment.

In November 2019, the first festival of children's museum routes "Time of Discovery" was organised. This project, original in its content and unique for Yekaterinburg, was supported by the Department for Culture of the Government of Yekaterinburg. Although new to Yekaterinburg, the festival took the form of an already-established tradition of children's museum festival events held in many cities, including Perm, Moscow, Kaliningrad, Vladivostok and Tallinn. However, one of the earliest adopters of this format is the Children's Days festival in Saint Petersburg, which celebrated its 15th anniversary this year. While preparing for the festival in Yekaterinburg, the organisers of the Children's Days in the northern capital acted as consultants and masterminds.

The event was held last year from October 26 to November 10 during the school holidays. Sergey Kamensky, Director of the Yekaterinburg History Museum and curator of the festival, noted that permanent museum exhibitions are usually targeted at an adult audience. Young visitors, as a rule, are not interested in reading long descriptions of exhibits, written in scientific language, or in being passive listeners not manifesting themselves. Many of them believe that visiting a museum is boring. We want such visits to become fascinating events, comprising cognitive games for children (Kostyuk, 2019). According to the information received from the project organisers, 12,000 schoolchildren of different ages took part in the project⁷. Each of

⁷ <http://ekaterinburg300.ru/vo-fest>

the 14 leading city museums, which served as the festival venues, prepared special guides for children with bright pictures and tricky questions. In the course of the quest, the children were invited to exercise their observational skills and resourcefulness while getting directly acquainted with the museums' collections, to look for answers to the questions, pay attention to the most unusual exhibits and learn interesting facts related to them. Especially for the festival, the museums staff developed guides, which helped the young visitors digest the exhibition through the form of a game, without an adult's assistance. In the festival curator's words, "Time of Discovery" is a game-excursion. All achievements were recorded in the individually issued form "Your Route": each museum visited by the student recorded the completed tasks. The main feature of the event was not the number of routes passed through, or even the number of "correct" answers, but rather the process itself. Upon presentation of the participant's diploma at Yekaterinburg History Museum, each participant received a memorable souvenir.

The inclusion of the younger generation in such active cognitive activities connected with the region's history and culture is an important step towards overcoming problems associated with the preservation of historical and cultural heritage, the transmission of memory and acquisition of identity, as well as taking the form of familiarisation with meanings and values of the past. This is what gives the process its vivacity and immediacy. The students obtained the opportunity to diversify their leisure activities within the urban environment, to demonstrate their independence and activity. The mini-guides created to pass the quest in each museum turned into unique "memory cards" about the event: the schoolchildren appeared to greatly enjoy sharing their impressions concerning those tasks which had been completed by everyone and which remained in their hands, having become a part of their personal history.

A different kind of museum project was aimed at solving problems of civil-patriotic orientation, directly included in the educational environment. The implementation of "Yekaterinburg – my favourite city" began with the thematic lesson dedicated to Yekaterinburg's patron Saint Catherine of Alexandria. The objective of the lesson was to explain the significance of the patron saint's personality to the schoolchildren, to introduce them to spiritual values and humanistic ideals. The author of the project, Irina Murzina, outlines the following priorities of the city thematic lesson:

- to cultivate a sense of belonging to the city's history as the basis of cultural identity;
- to promote comprehension of such traditional Russian spiritual and moral values as love for one's homeland, faith, spirituality, true beauty and harmony, humanistic ideals;
- to promote schoolchildren's interest in the history of their native land (see: Murzina, 2019).

Although the described event provoked controversy, receiving all kinds of comments both positive and negative in the media and on social networks, it is indisputable that, without knowledge of the place where a person studies, lives or works, the concept of history of the city, region or country will be incomplete. Through

the author's apparently simple and elementary ways of interacting with first graders and other students, mechanisms are launched that contribute to a personal feeling of the history of the place – and, along with this, the acquisition of identity.

According to the information provided by the Department for Education of Yekaterinburg, 162 schools took part in the project⁸. Among the participants were 36,970 primary school students, 31,290 secondary school students and 2,217 teachers. These studies are described in detail on Irina Murzina's Facebook page⁹.

The lesson dedicated to the saint patron of Yekaterinburg became a part of the big regional cultural and educational patriotic project "We are Uralians!" (*Regional'nyi kul'turno-prosvetitel'skii patrioticheskiy proekt "My – Ural'tsy!"*, 2019). Its developers and authors aim to address problems of regional education through the creation of a systematic programme, encompassing all educational levels (from pre-school to professional education, including supplementary and leisure activities), devoted to the history and contemporaneity of the region. The project is focused on the implementation of the idea of unity of classroom, extracurricular and out-of-school activities according to the understanding that this is possible when combining the educational, cultural and intellectual space of the region.

In order to achieve the main objective of the project (the development and implementation of a regional cultural and educational patriotic project aimed at formation of a positive identity (personal, regional, civil) and ensuring unity of all stages of education) (Ibid.), the authors consistently address the ostensible tasks, including mechanisms for ensuring children's direct involvement (in relation to the lesson) in cultural and educational practices. Despite the process of introduction to cultural values being localised and limited to the educational institution, the penetration of such practices into education solves the problem of institutional isolation. Familiarity with the city and its history through forms understandable and accessible for younger schoolchildren resolves a particular cultural tension that sometimes arises due to an inability to visit museums, unavailability of sources, lack of information or perceived need. In this sense, the project is significant in terms of cultural policy.

In autumn 2019, employees of the Sverdlovsk Regional Museum of Local History¹⁰ launched an initiative entitled "The Museum Passes an Exam", which was aimed at demonstrating the possibilities of museum technologies to a youth audience. The action was organised by the Centre for Innovative Museum Technologies in cooperation with Ural State Pedagogical University. Future teachers visited the two exhibitions of the Sverdlovsk Regional Museum of Local History in express-excursion mode. The first of these was Poklevsky-Kozell's mansion¹¹, where a classical interior exposition, revealing the daily life of pre-revolutionary Yekaterinburg, was presented.

⁸ <https://xn--80acgfbs1azdqr.xn--p1ai/%D0%B6%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%8F%D0%BC/%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5/%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82>

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100030597372303>

¹⁰ <http://uole-museum.ru/>

¹¹ <http://uole-museum.ru/museums/muzejno-vystavochnyj-tsentr-dom-poklevskih-kozell/>

The second exhibition took place at the sculptor Ernst Neizvestny's Museum¹², where the future teachers got acquainted with original artistic works and modern presentation technologies. In special "record books", the students assessed both museums for richness of content, historical credibility of the presented materials, attractiveness of the expositions and involvement in the atmosphere (*Budushchie pedagogi prinyali ekzamen u dvuh muzeev*, n.d.).

In the after-exam discussion, students, teachers and museum staff speculated on why not all museums meet the needs of today's society and what specific problems historical, local lore and art museum should aim to overcome. During the discussion, the students were observed to be divided into two ideological camps. The first camp argued that historical museums lack interactivity due to not all of them being able to afford to host genuine masterpieces with which many visitors would like to get acquainted in order to access their historical, cultural and artistic heritage. According to the participants of the event, the main advantage of the application of information technologies in the museum environment became everyone's access to information relating to cultural heritage: the opportunity to see the masterpieces on display in many countries of the world today without necessarily going there. The use of technologies for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage provides an opportunity to familiarise oneself with it in detail: the images on the screens can be zoomed and rotated. Documents and artefacts related to Neizvestny's fate characterise him as a person of extraordinary thinking who built his relationships in accordance with the social norms of his time.

The other camp of students voted for the primacy of the museum exhibit: the authenticity of the museum object is important and interesting, first of all, by its involvement in the epoch it witnessed. Here, the point is precisely the memory it carries and the ability to transmit the information embedded in it. Both camps agreed that museums need to change, but while maintaining a balance between "classics" and "innovation." Along with the opportunities that information technologies offer to the visitor, the participants mentioned a loss of sense of ownership of the object – the opportunity to contemplate (and sometimes touch) an authentic artefact; they also noted that a museum object presented through multimedia loses its uniqueness and charm, becoming a product of mass consumption, about which Walter Benjamin wrote at the beginning of the 20th century (Benjamin, 1935/1996).

In this regard, the use of information technologies solves many tasks. For example, visitors entering Ernst Neizvestny's Museum in Yekaterinburg are welcomed by the sculptor's voice, preparing them for a dialogue with him as the author of many famous works, along with the epoch in which he lived and created, providing a special atmosphere for perception of the museum exhibits. It is clear that the opportunity to see the master's works with the help of interactive and multimedia means does not necessarily detract from a genuine enjoyment and perception of the artist's talent. Students noted the attractiveness and involvement in the atmosphere of the exhibition, since everyone was able to construct their own

¹² <http://en-artmuseum.ru/>

route and hold an interesting dialogue with the historical and cultural heritage in the modern language.

Conclusion

Presently, forms of cultural and educational practices are quite diverse and aimed at the widest range of consumers. This meets the objectives of cultural policies related to the inclusion of cultural heritage and the transmission of the people's experience and cultural memory. The preservation of cultural heritage – values, meanings and material cultural objects – is significant for the museum as a cultural institution and the functions assigned to it. The museum environment has always been an important element in the formation of historical memory, comprising a space for uniting its components. At present, projects implemented by museums in the regions contribute to the preservation and modernising of historical memory, as well as its transmission to future generations. Among the most effective factors of development and transformation of museum spaces on the way to openness, accessibility and dialogue are those resources used to facilitate non-institutionalised activities. These include alternative museum initiatives, often of an informal nature: games, events, excursions, etc. They provide public resonance and interest in the museum as a multifunctional cultural centre, where boundaries (linguistic, ethnic, national, age, etc.) can be surmounted and communicative interaction facilitated, ensuring a dialogue between the past and the present.

An important mechanism for the transmission of cultural experience, both of a particular people and of humanity as a whole, is the direct, living involvement of those to whom the transmission is provided. Pre-schoolers, schoolchildren and students comprise a generation that will also face the task of facilitating the transmission of memory and experience. The formation of the younger generation's identity, worldview, civic position and patriotism is possible through their inclusion in a dialogue about values and meanings. These are enshrined in images, stories, artefacts, oral traditions, etc. Cultural and educational activities, intensively positioned by museums, have become a part of the museum environment in an age of globalisation and digitalisation. Building constructive relations with educational institutions and organisations, the modern museum solves not only its "own" institutional tasks, but also apply to a different level of professional communication, which is characteristic of:

- the directed actions of public authorities for management in the sphere of culture;
- the formation of a professionally-focused and expert community (researchers, teachers, guides, marketing specialists, etc.) mastering the techniques and technologies of cultural and historical experience transmission;
- the competent entry of all the dialogue participants into the space of culture;
- intelligent immersion in the historical and cultural context;
- competent interpretation of significant information;
- competently solved marketing tasks.

It should be noted that the described practices involving various aged children of and students took place in 2019. This is an intensive, substantial, but also complex, activity, which is carried out in order to reduce the increasing gap with the past and tackle intergenerational problems. Cultural and educational activities are aimed at maintaining interest in the historical and cultural past, thus transmitting cultural heritage. The technicality of cultural heritage transmission organically combines traditional and innovative practices involved in the comprehension of significant events, places and artefacts. The development of a strategy of interactive communication in the context of modern culture is significant for participants regardless of how much emphasis is placed on the technological component. The main condition of communication sustainability is the acquisition of meaning, introduction to the values of cultural heritage and the interlocutor's sensual-emotional response. Well-organised communication allows the realisation of the cultural and educational potential of museums, using both traditional approaches (still relevant for the visitor) and multimedia technologies in its transmission.

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